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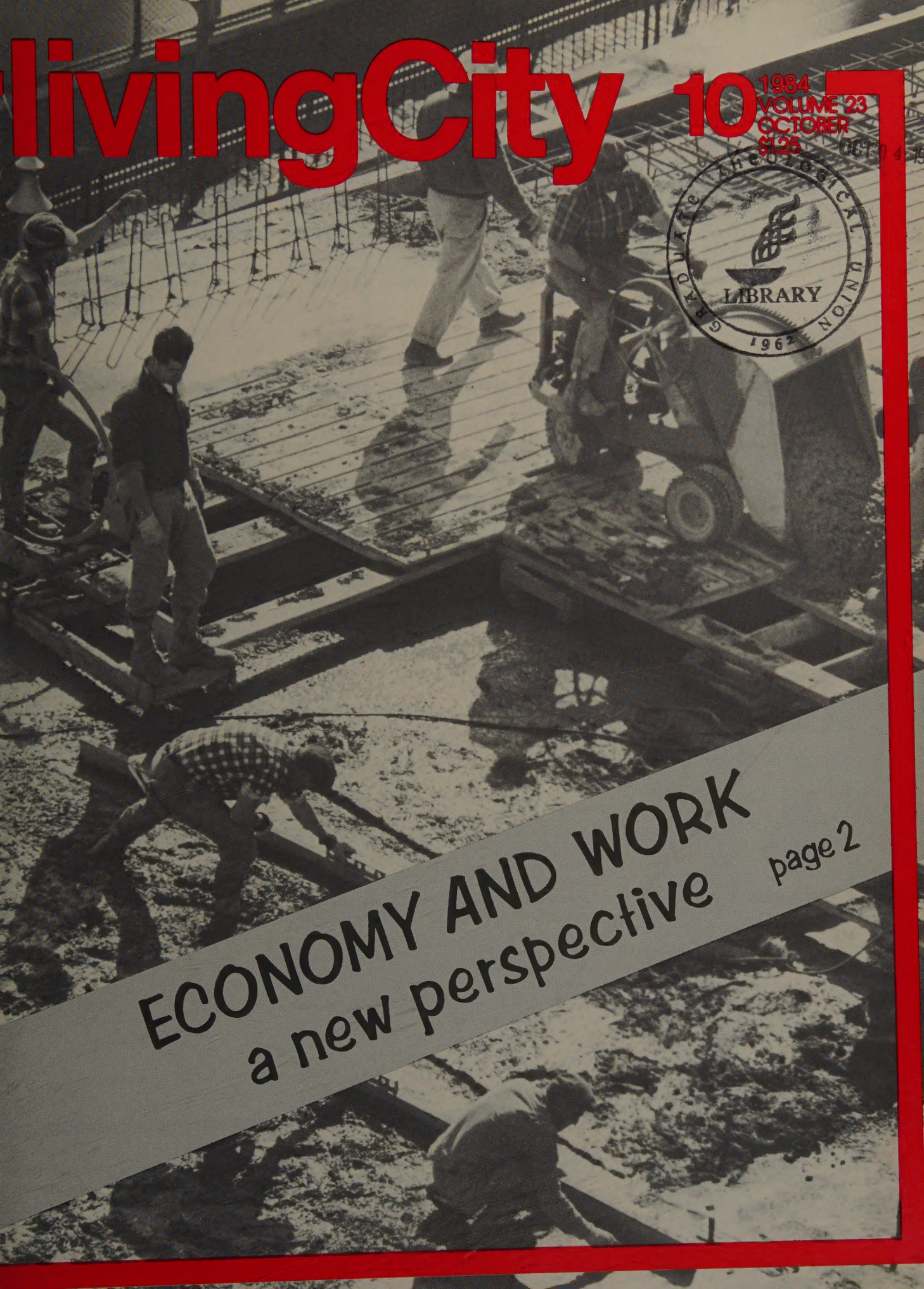

# ECONOMY AND WORK
## a new perspective

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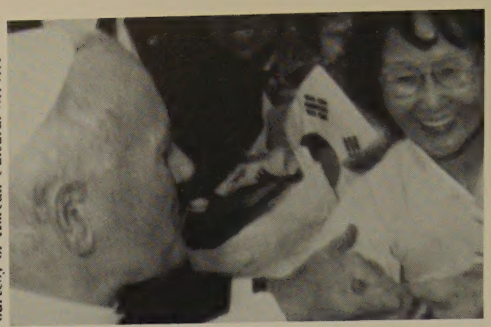

Courtesy of Korean Cultural Service NY

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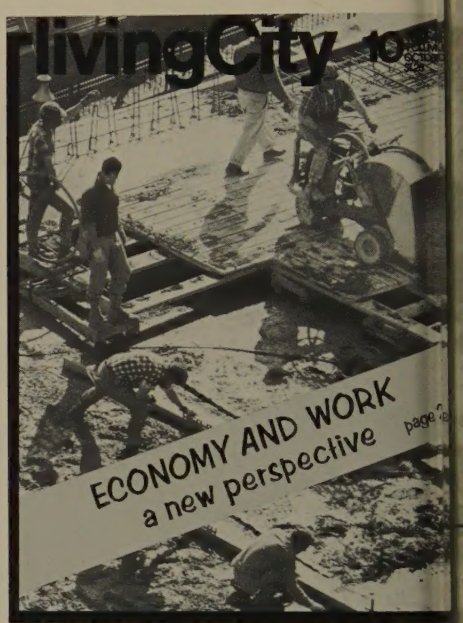


**Living City is published 11 times a year (10 monthly and a bimonthly issue in August-September) by the Focolare Movement, a non-profit corporation, P. O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.**

**Subscription prices for one year: USA and possessions: US$12.75; Canada: US$15.00; Elsewhere: US$18.00; Air Mail (all countries): US$25.00.**

**An envelope is enclosed in each magazine for subscription orders and inquiries: LIVING CITY, P. O. Box 126, Jamaica, NY 11415.**

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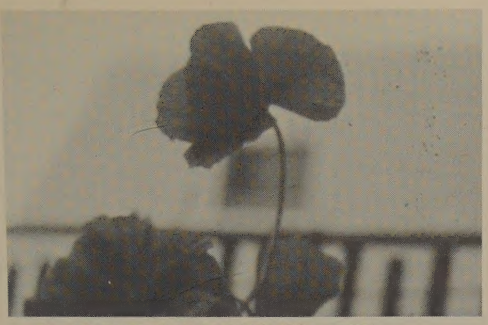

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DUTCH: "Nieuwe Stad" - St. Stephanusstrasse 11 - Nijmegen - Holland

GERMAN: "Neue Stadt" - Gleissnerstrasse 87 8000 Munchen 83 - Germany

OTHER ENGLISH EDITIONS:

1. "New City" - 57 Twyford Avenue - London W3 England
2. "New City" - P.O. Box 332 - Manila, Philippines
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# "All the peop
# deserve

*This message of Pope John Paul II, addressed to the children of Korea during his recent visit there, reaches out to and embraces all the children of the world.*

Dear Children of Korea,

It is a joy for me to greet you today and to offer you a special message for Children's Day.

What I want to speak to you is about is *love*, the love for which you were made, the love that each one of you longs for.

One of the disciples of Jesus, called John the Evangelist, wrote a letter to the early Christians explaining that "love is of God" and that "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:7-8). The God who is love, and who has loved us so much, has in fact given us a share in his life, just as a father shares his life with his children. And God wants us *to love him in return* for the love and the life that he has given us. God is our Father and he asks us to love him as his children.

*But God also wants us to love others.* This is the meaning of our lives: to love God and to love others—to love our parents, our brothers and sisters, our relatives and friends, all our fellow human beings, even those who may have hurt us or offended us. To love our neighbor means living for others, lending a helping hand, giving service where needed, being just, honest and pure, gentle, truthful and kind. To love our neighbor means helping to build a better world.

We do this not so much by words as by what we do, because actions speak louder than words. This is what Saint John meant when he wrote: "Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18).

Dear children of Korea: all the world's children, *all the people in the world deserve your love*, regardless of their nationality, sex, religion or race; whether they are strong or weak, rich or poor, healthy or sick. To love is to think about other people, to accept others, to go out of your way to help them, to serve them, to encourage them. To

# in the world
# ur love"

Photo courtesy Korea National Tourism Corporation

share with others the world and its good things, the way that God shared them with you. In loving others, you will discover the meaning of life: indeed you will discover the Giver of life, the Creator of the world, the God and Father of us all.

And if you are Christian, dear children, you have *a special reason to love: in order to be like Jesus*, who is God's eternal Son, the Son who became man in order to give his life for us on the Cross, out of love, to help us to understand the meaning of love, to make us too able to love.

And today, I, John Paul II, as the Representative of Jesus, as Bishop of Rome, *offer my love to every boy and girl in Korea*, to each and every one without any distinction. I proclaim your human dignity as children of God created to share in God's love forever. I proclaim your rights, no matter how little or helpless you may be and I proclaim the duties that go with your rights, which you are called to perform out of love, in order to safeguard the rights of others. I especially love *every child who suffers*, who is lonely, who is abandoned, especially those with no one to love them and care for them. Dear children, I give you all the love in my heart.

I also want to encourage all those working to build a world of peace for you to live in, those who take care of your health, who teach you, who speak to you about God. I am spiritually close to your *parents*, who have transmitted to you God's gift of life and are the first ones to teach you the meaning of love. Today I join my love to theirs, and together we join our love to the love of God, who has loved us and asks us to love in return.

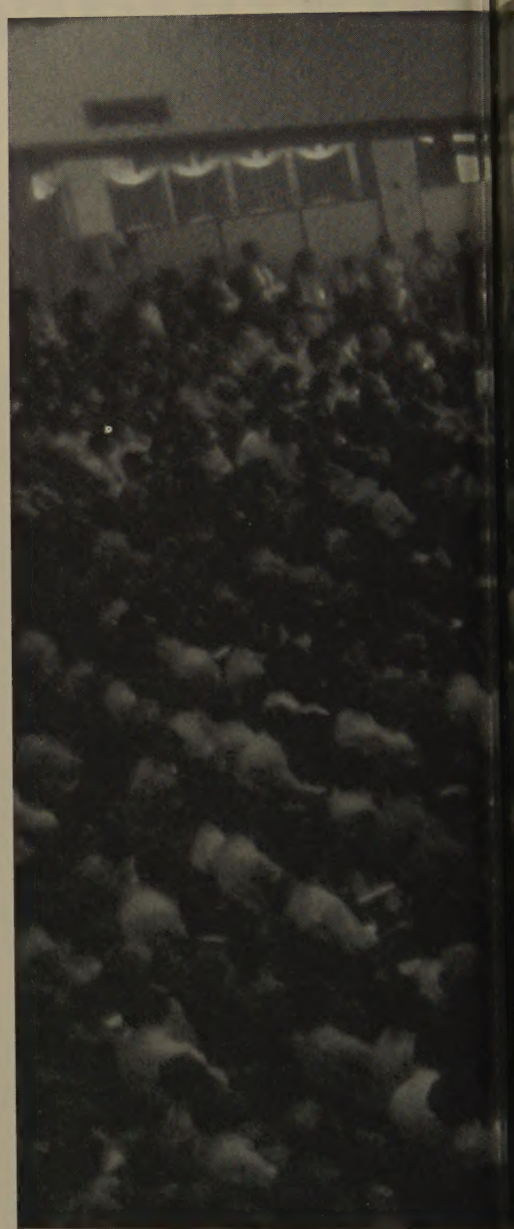
Dear children of Korea, your future and the destiny of this land depend, under God, on *your willingness to love*. This is my message for you today and for the years to come, my message of love: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God" (1 Jn. 4:7).

*Reprinted from* L'Osservatore Romano, *English Edition, May 7, 1984.*

# ECONOMY and WORK– a new perspective

by Mariele and Pino Quartana

*A new outlook and new solutions in an area of life which concerns many of us.*



"Economy and Work" — a touchy subject today. It is the rocky ground where anxieties, frustrations, struggles and vindications are matters of everyday life. It is an aspect of life which involves everyone from the ordinary citizen to the head of state. Political parties and organizations are trying to cope with it, yet no one is capable of finding an acceptable answer to the basic needs of humanity and, particularly, of the young. The future of society, in part, hinges on economy and work. This is where ideologies clash against one another, seeking solutions to the problem: collectivism on one side, economic liberalism on the other.

If Christians today were to bring their specific contribution, what kind of research would they have to do? What ideas should they emphasize? Is it possible to stay free from the preset patterns of our struggling society and find new inspiration in the words of the Gospel? Can they reopen the discourse onto other dimensions that are not merely human, but human and divine at the same time? How can individuals or groups make an impact in the field of economy and work?

These were the questions faced by the organizers of the Convention held in Rome on June 3, 1984 and attended, with lively interest, by 3,500 delegates of the New Humanity Movement[1] who are active in the fields of economy and work. It was a day in which the ideas suggested in the various addresses given, alternated with those offered in the personal examples shared by a number of the participants.

The delegates came from all continents, bringing with them the experiences of their efforts in which they had recognized strong signs of hope. The talks were widely varied in content but, in all, a clear, common line came to light. Even in our present world, in which industrialization is flanked by economic inequality, it is possible to bring about an upward turn and launch new and fascinating projects. Even seen from this angle, the Gospel is a greatly unexplored mine of ideas and energies capable of provoking a radical change in the situation.

All those attending the convention left with the certainty of having found something that met their most urgent demands. Taken one by one, the experiences might have seemed to offer only a partial solution to the immense problems at hand. Yet, they did not remain on the surface of the issues; they all entered into the actual state of things and referred to specific situations. They gave efficient confirmation of the fact that,

*The participation at this first International Convention of delegates of the New Humanity Movement active in the fields of economy and work was very enthusiastic.*

by living the Gospel message, it was possible to act, not only on the spiritual level, but on the level of concrete, everyday situations as well. It was possible, furthermore, to put one's finger on a number of the problems facing today's society and begin, even now, the journey towards a "new earth."

The eagerly anticipated talk of Chiara Lubich laid, in fact, the foundations for the clear and radical change of mentality which comes about when the Gospel is put into practice. Her talk encompassed, in a strong synthesis, all the talks presented in the course of the day.

Her words gave particular emphasis to the value of the experiences which were highlights of this day of study and sharing. They were presented as a contribution to the "civilization of love." Thus, one had the impression, in the end, of having found ideal, and at the same time, practical instruments to use in the most diverse local situations—in Brazil as well as in Germany or the United States, in the Philippines as well as in Africa. Some of the key ideas of the day give us a sense of the stimulating power of the encounter. First amongst all was the idea of "seeking first the Kingdom of God and his justice"[2] as a fundamental principle for the field of economics. The experiences shared went to prove that to those who follow this path faithfully, "everything else will be given besides." Great relevance therefore was given to faith in Providence which comes before trust in our human means, an understanding, in other words, that everything comes from God. A new concept of

work was forcefully portrayed thinking of Christ the worker as a model—work as an extension of God's work of creation, fatigue and difficulties involved representing our participation in the world's redemption.

The communion of goods as a concrete application of the basic social law of love was also discussed, a communion of goods that can be carried out in many ways: not only on the individual, personal level, but among groups and nations as well. It was clear that a planetary social conscience needs to be acquired to make up for the enormous inequality among nations, to heal the gaping wounds in humanity and to do away with the constant threat to peace.

One of the characteristics of the New Humanity Movement is not to stop at the theory of things but to transform ideas immediately into life using at the same time all the experiences derived to draw new guidelines.

"It has been explained to us how the early Christians used to live the aspect of economy," Dori Zamboni said at the conclusion of the day's meeting, "and how we, the Christians of the 20th century, should act. This means that in the Christian sense of the word, the mutual sharing of goods and also the sharing of our needs must serve as the basis of every effort towards a true betterment of the economic condition of society. This renewed effort to live as more authentic Christians is not only our religious duty; it is a way of fulfilling ourselves as men and women, of reawakening our social consciousness—not so much by holding meetings and giving speeches, as by creating relationships through concrete service."

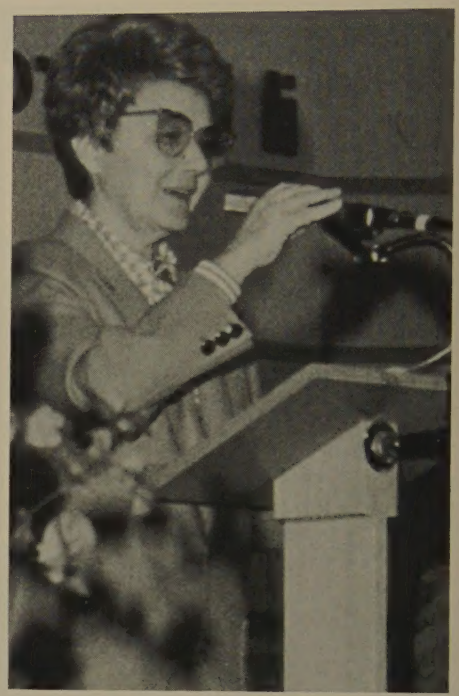
Hence, the commitment to give of what we have to those who are in need, must be seen as a duty to be taken seriously. This has been a practice in the New Humanity Movement ever since its inception, so that today, although in a manner suited to our times, we may relive the life of the early Christians who were able to say that "none of their members was ever in want" (Acts 4:34).

As for the concrete fruits of the convention, the project was launched for the founding of The New Humanity International Bureau for the World of Economy and Work, to be presided over by Dr. Alberto Ferrucci of Genova, Italy. It will be in direct communication with various National Bureaus which are being established. The purpose of these bureaus is to consolidate initiatives which are already underway, to promote new ones in keeping with the needs and problems of the various countries, and to elaborate projects and solutions in accordance with local needs.

Furthermore, schools will be created for the updating on the social situations of all countries, and to maintain a true dialogue, in the spirit of the Gospel message, with all areas of cultural activity.

Another original project is the further development of the Movement's already existing "mini cities," as well as the foundation of new ones, in order to multiply these small examples of international, modern, working cities where the inhabitants live and act in accordance with a Gospel-inspired planetary social awareness. These "cities" then can serve as models and reference points for vaster projects.

*1) See inside back cover. 2) (Cf. Mt. 6:33)*



*We are publishing Chiara Lubich's address to the participants at the convention.*

We are here today from all parts of Italy, from other European nations and with representatives from other continents, as people from the 'world' of work, an expression of the New Humanity Movement, whose purpose is to incarnate in all expressions of human life the Focolare Movement's Gospel-based ideal.

Why are we here? We are here because we believe that the charism of our Movement has something to offer also on the subject of these two aspects of our daily life: economy and work.

We know that our Movement came into being from one infinite, immense reality, a name which we pronounce with love and fear: God. The choice of God as the ideal of this Movement, in the midst of the war

which was destroying all our human ideals, was its point of departure. The Movement, therefore, is aware that its task is to contribute towards giving full meaning to everyone and everything by affirming that all things have their origin in God and by working at bringing all things back to him.

In fact, the charism of the Movement helps us to interpret the universe, people and history and all that is related to them in God.

This is why today we are setting out to examine also the human aspects of work and economy in this vision. Practically speaking, we want to offer our contribution so that economy and work may be always more in unison with God's plan.

We are Christians and members of the Focolare Movement and, with the grace of God, we want to be authentic Christians and members of this Movement. This is why we cannot be satisfied with semi-clear ideas or approximate information on how God considers these topics which touch us so closely. We want to go to the very root of things.

Therefore, the day which is now beginning will not be characterized by the festive features present in the annual manifestations of the Movement's various branches. Above all, it will be a moment for in-depth study. Experiences of life will be presented as well, for they are the tangible effect of study transformed into action. They help us to improve our commitment and the quality of our work and extend the proper methods for their implementation.

We will go back to humanity's earliest roots in order to look very briefly at God's view of economy and work as presented in the Old Testament. Then we want to consider his idea as it emerges in the New Testament; we want to grasp it in the teachings of the Church and compare it with what is being said today on the subject.

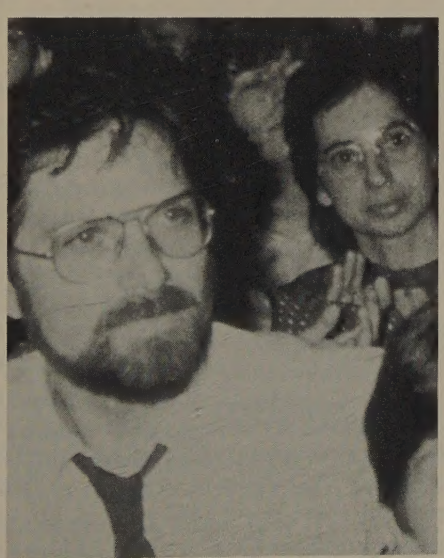
Then, inasmuch as is possible, we will also look at the present-day problems in the world of work. We will offer a few of the fundamental ideas of our Movement which, if they have come from God, certainly meet the needs of today's world.

Finally, we are confident that if we are gathered here in his name, the Lord will open wide before us new horizons and new goals to be reached.

## Seek first his kingdom

Let's start out now by looking at those very principles which the Movement's charism has highlighted throughout these forty years, in order to know what attitude we should have towards the aspects of economy and work.

The "New Humanity" Movement, is an expression of the Focolare Movement which is also called the Work of Mary. This Movement—like Mary who was both the Seat of Wisdom and a mother at home—is a Movement which, in each of its branches and mass movements, is both supernatural and natural. It could not be otherwise. For we are Christians and we are human beings—two aspects that are quite different even though one relates to the other. As a matter of fact, because we are Christians we are more fully human. Human beings, in fact, are truly fulfilled as such when they live in communion with God as it was restored by Christ.



*The audience followed the talks with interest. The participants came from many European countries and from every continent.*

This Movement—precisely because it is both, so to speak, a heavenly and an earthly one —bases every expression of its life, and so also that of economy and work, on some aspects which are more from "above" we could say, and on others which are more from "below".

As far as the more heavenly or supernatural aspect of economy is concerned, a central passage for all of us (and this is also defined in our Statutes) lies in the following sentence from the Gospel: "Set your hearts on his Kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well" (Mt. 6:33).

In order to support ourselves we are called to be concerned first of all with the kingdom of God.

Most of us are lay people (including those who do not get married in order to dedicate themselves more freely to working for the kingdom of God) and, as such, we must base the economic aspect of our lives on work. We must not depend primarily on our work for the needs of our earthly existence, but rather on God's providence.

"Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteous-

ness" means to live our faith, to make God reign in us and in the world. However, if we seek the kingdom of God, the rest comes as well, in addition.

If we act as sons and daughters, God the Father will look after us. Certainly, in this aspect, as in all others, he wishes to do his part for his human family, and to do so as only he can. Therefore he provides for us in a way we cannot even imagine.

## Humanity and work

However, if Jesus asks us to seek first of all the kingdom of God, this does not mean that he exempts us from work. On the contrary, as stated in our Statutes, we should have a very high concept of work. A very high concept of work simply because God himself considers it in this way.

While it is a fact that human beings, made in the image of God find fulfillment in their communion with God, it is also true that this is not their only fundamental characteristic. The bible points out that it is also characteristic of the human being to provide for sustenance and to work.

We *must* work. This is so very obvious for God that in the Ten Commandments, for example, he wished to stress the fact that we should *not* work on the day of rest. He did not give a particular commandment about it in the Gospels, however to help us understand that to say "human" is to say "work," when the Word of God became a man, he did not withdraw into solitude in order to meditate and pray in the thirty years of his private life. He was holy, he was God himself; but he chose to be a worker. It is clear then that for God, work is such an important aspect of our life that if it were lacking we would have to consider ourselves less human if we did not work. Also the members of the Work of Mary—like Jesus—earn their living by working. Indeed, since the Movement found its initial inspiration in the home of three workers, Jesus, Mary and Joseph (in the house of Nazareth, traditionally believed to have been transported by angels to Loreto, Italy), its members feel that in working, they fulfill, as did Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the will of God.

Even the focolarini[1] who are called to community life, must bring only one dowry with them on entering the Focolare —that of knowing how to work and to earn their living.

For them as for all, work will not be an additional element joined to a life of prayer or apostolic activity. Work will be their very life, in the sense that their vocation, for instance, is not so much to spend hours in adoration, but to offer God their work.

Even though they are called in a rather special way to proclaim a great Ideal to the world, they must do so above all by 'doing', by working rather than by preaching. In this way they continue the private life of Jesus. They serve God as focolarini first and foremost by serving him as workers. If we had to give a definition of them as focolarini, we would have to say: they are workers.

## The hundredfold

Since everyone is obliged to work, and because it is by working that we fulfill ourselves and live God's plan, work should be performed as perfectly as possible. The members of the Movement are perfect if they are perfect workers. For this reason they are called to make of every hour of work a masterpiece of precision, order and harmony. They must love punctuality, be diligent and make good use of their talents to improve their work. Just as, for other reasons, religious studies are obligatory for them, they must also continually perfect themselves in their jobs by studying material relevant to their professions.

In our day, for some parts of humanity, life has become nothing but a frenzy of work, in quest of a super perfection which leaves no room for anything else in life. In other parts of humanity, because work is considered an absolute value, the motto is "omnia vincit labor"—"work is supreme," "work conquers all." We can see, therefore, that by accentuating the value of work, our Movement meets the needs of our times, although it does not make of work the "only thing necessary" in life, nor the only goal. What is supreme, what conquers all—we know—is love: "omnia vincit amor."

In order to give human work its proper value, our Movement would like to see a principle put into practice which might seem to contradict what has been said up until now, but in fact it does not. This principle calls everyone to work with a certain detachment from his or her profession. It is a principle which every person should put into practice because—at least in their spiritual application—all the words of Christ hold true for everyone: "If anyone comes to me without putting aside his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:26). "And everyone who has left houses,

brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or lands, for the sake of my name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also inherit eternal life" (Mt. 19:29).

Everyone should be detached then, at least spiritually, from his or her fields, which means his or her job or profession. "Fields" of work should be loved, yes, but for God, not more than God. We must be willing to put our jobs aside should they begin to take the first place in our hearts.

With what results? "Everyone who has left ... will be repaid a hundred times over and inherit eternal life."

"A hundred times over," the hundredfold, which means an indefinite number—a hundred times over also in goods and financial gain. So from the little detachment asked of us, we experience anew the abundance of the Father's providence.

*Felipa Coleman is one of the managers of a department of the United States government in Washington, D.C. She attended the convention with others from North America and was one of the speakers.*

## A peaceful revolution

These few ideas have already shown not only how the Movement's concept of work is relevant but also how its method of working meets the demands of today's world.

In view of the many needs of humanity today, throughout the world, for material goods and employment, especially among young people, won't the knowledge that there are concrete possibilities for receiving the hundredfold brighten our view of life which is very often darkened by a feeling of helplessness or tardiness in meeting our brothers' and sisters' needs? Won't this understanding of the hundredfold encourage us all to do our part so that God the Father may do his.?

We are familiar with this hundredfold he sends. Every day we see remarkable examples of it. We have no greater desire than that this may become everyone's experience, in order to find a solution, also in this manner, to such urgent problems as hunger and thirst in the world.

We have experienced how the Gospel is—as the title of one of our books published in Brazil states—"the strength of the poor." With the Gospel, the poor themselves find a way to rise up from subhuman situations. Since they believe in God and obey his words, he intervenes.

We also know how the Gospel frees the rich from the burden and anxieties associated with being wealthy. It leads them to live Jesus' commandment of love and so, without any violent revolution, they give what they have or they share their goods with others.

Isn't the principle of performing one's job with commitment and perfection an excellent remedy for the lack of responsibility and diligence in the working habits of certain peoples or for the absenteeism which afflicts our working world here and there?

Isn't that certain degree of detachment we are asked to have from our jobs, a good preparation for those who, due to technological change, are forced to move on to other sectors, a change which involves a continual retraining for new responsibilities and positions and which oftentimes people are unwilling to assume because they are unprepared to change?

## The communion of goods

These are two pillars upon which our Movement rests: to seek the kingdom of God and to work.

But we members of the Focolare Movement have our own particular way of seeking the kingdom of God. We must seek it in accordance with the way

God has pointed out to us. It is a way we travel along, not individually but together. In fact, we feel that we are sons and daughters of an era in which the Holy Spirit is underlining the words which form a synthesis of the Gospel: "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 16:21), and is underlining the unity which Jesus asked of the Father. In so doing, he is forcefully calling people to work side by side and form, with all those who so desire, one heart and one soul.

This, however, has important and noteworthy consequences. One example, typical of the members of our Movement from its very birth, is a practical expression which must be at the basis of every other activity and consideration concerning the use of goods and the solution to social problems. This practice is the communion of goods, which is achieved by some members in a total way—they give all they have— and by other members through regular contributions of their surplus.

This practice touches each individual in a personal and very real way, and so it forms a more legitimate and fruitful basis for any other good and lawful method of guaranteeing an honest and dignified means of livelihood for all.

## The person first

Since we know how to walk through life united to one another, being one heart and one soul, we have the possibility of giving a hand to humanity today, so that it may reach its very important goals.

We know that the economic situation of present-day society is characterized by industrial production in which the individual is often subordinate to the efficiency and production of the machine.

The center of the entire productive system is no longer the person, but production itself. The goods count, not the person and his or her work.

Often the laborer's work has become meaningless because it is not in function of the individual as God intended and does not contribute towards the fulfillment of one's potential for creativity and intelligence. Work has taken on an alienating character. At times it is also dangerous physically, but even more so, psychologically damaging—as work tolerated because there is no alternative, as a mere means of survival. It frequently produces a sense of emptiness and people reject such a concept of work.

Then, alongside the physical fatigue, there are other elements which in some places still make work a drugery, like the repetition of movements. This makes of the person, not a being created in the image of God the Creator and therefore always an innovator, but a machine that repeats the same motions, the same gestures time and again.

Furthermore, we know that too often work can be oppressive if it is to the benefit of a group of persons or nations but not of the individual and of all peoples.

Therefore, as Pope John Paul II affirms, this difficult road of the indispensable transformation of the structures of economic life, is one in which it will not be easy to go forward without the intervention of a true conversion of mind, will and heart." [2]

The first step to take is to reaffirm that the person takes precedence over capital, over ownership, and over structures, creating a work ethic which bears in mind that "through work, man ... achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being'.[3]

## Human sociality

A second change of attitude, however, must come into play here, and must be made by all.

In the name of God who created them, human beings must be aware of their sociality, of their social nature, otherwise they are not completely human. In fact, another of their characteristics, according to Genesis, besides communion with God, besides being required to support themselves and dedicate themselves to work, is sociality—the interweaving of human relationships.

We know what sociality means for God. It means to love others as ourselves. As ourselves, not less. Indeed, to love them with a love which, since it comes from more than one person, becomes reciprocal; and, because it is inspired by Christ, generates unity.

Herein lies the meaning of what we stressed earlier, namely that we walk through life together being one heart and one soul. Our collective spirituality, derived from the Gospel, not only can contribute to, but can be of vital importance in finding solutions to the present problems of the working world.

In this spirituality, every person in the working world, (from the owner to the administrator, from the director to the technicians, from office workers to laborers) in order to build solidarity with others, must love everyone in such a way that he or she becomes "one" with the others.

In this spirituality, mutual love leads to reciprocal understanding, to sharing the fatigue

of the others, to making our own the problems of the others and to seeking solutions together. It leads us to find common agreements for new forms of organizations in the working world. All come to share and participate together in the means of production, and in the fruits and profits.

With what consequences? If, previously, for example, for individual laborers, industrialized work was synonymous with being crushed and deprived of their personality, with being unable to see the fruits of their intelligence and efforts, now because they consider their own all that regards the others as well, work cannot help but take on meaning, indeed a stimulating meaning.

## Unity in the working world

What is needed, therefore, is a new awareness of the social dimension. We need to realize that in the world, humanity is one family, and live accordingly. Just as in a natural family even the youngest of ten children feels that everything that belongs to the entire family is his or hers: father, mother, goods, house, objects, and so on, similarly, every worker and in particular laborers today, in order to regain awareness that they are human beings, indeed more so because of their work, must know that all that the industrialized world produces belongs to them.

We know, it's difficult, and every day the newspapers bear witness to this. It's difficult to reach these goals simply through good will, with mere human strength or with a vision of work which is purely an earthly one.

We know, for example, that it was solidarity which led laborers of the last century to fight against the injustices of the rising industrial system. This was described by Pope John Paul II as "a just social reaction."

*Sociologist Maria de Jesus and farm worker Joca, both from Brazil, shared their experience of the "peaceful revolution" brought about by living the Gospel. The result, in this case, was the development from a group of divided "squatter" families to a small community of persons who confront their problems together in the spirit of Gospel charity.*

Although definite improvements have been achieved since then in safeguarding the basic rights of workers, still in many countries, under various systems, old injustices persist and new ones have arisen.

The fact is that it is not sufficient to unite laborers to resolve economic problems. It is necessary to unite all men and women who are involved in this field of human endeavor which we call the working world.

## The civilization of love

Not only this, but the working world itself is linked with all the other 'worlds' of human endeavor—to the political world, to legal structures, to health, education and so forth.

In order for work to regain its full significance for the individual person, there must be the rediscovery of a vast social awareness. Indeed, since the economy of each country is so linked to that of other nations, the situation requires a "global" social awareness as the Pope has also affirmed.

Who is capable of helping individuals to fully achieve this and to regard themselves as members of one great human family... "without denying man's origins and his membership of his family, his people and his nation, or the obligations arising therefrom..."?[4] Who can accomplish this after human beings have shattered their union with God through sin, thus seriously compromising over and over again, communion with other brothers and sisters

and therefore human solidarity? Who can do it?

Only Christ can—he who is so often relegated to our private life. Only his supernatural and universal love—so often considered as something limited to people's prayer life and is instead the indispensable leaven for the whole of human existence in all its expressions.

It is only with his love that we can build confidently a world of lasting justice and peace. As far as work is concerned, it is only with his love that selfishness and hatred—often considered the law of social life—can be eliminated. It is with his love that working communities will witness how unity rather than conflict can truly improve work. With his love the life of society itself will not be conceived as a struggle against someone but as a commitment to grow together.

Therefore only a new civilization based on love will be capable of offering a solution to the complex problems of the world of work.

## Planetary social awareness

It is to this civilization of love that we too feel particularly called. Very often we have asked ourselves why God has scattered us over all the earth; why we form this network, still loose in certain areas, but one which embraces the entire world and which will become tighter and tighter as time goes by.

One answer could be this: we as others, must contribute, in the name of God, to making this planetary social awareness blossom forth in the hearts of people everywhere. We too must contribute to the forming of men and women filled with the Spirit of Christ, who because they are often in contact with cultures of different lands, are better equipped to open the way to others and to open the hearts of many to a world-wide dimension.

As a result, we will witness a rich blossoming of good in the world of work as well. Indeed, there will be unpredictable results if we consider the fact that through mutual love, Christ will again be present in the world of work. Christ who said: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20). His spiritual but real presence will be there—among the laborers in workshops, in factories, in lumber yards, in mines; he will be with farm workers in the fields; we will find him among business men and women, among people in public service, in each and every work environment.

He will guide the world of work towards its true destiny.

We often think of Christ as being far away from us. Certainly, he is God, but he is also man, one of us, who today too wants to live among people and manifest, with his wisdom, the beauty and significance of work. It is Christ and only Christ who will fully free the working man and woman from the new form of slavery of the year 2000.

Therefore we need a planetary social awareness.

In fact, only people who are open to the entire world, people with a universal dimension of life, people who seek to open their hearts to the dimension of Christ, the God-man, can rise today to the nobility to which every person is called by God.

## With God in his work as Creator and Redeemer

To bring this about, however, we need to look at the world from a Christian point of view. In fact, around us today, there is a materialistic vision of work and of history. It asserts the priority of production (this is a capitalistic vision), or of human labor as a determining factor in history (this is a marxist vision) eliminating God completely.

Instead there is a Christian vision of work and of history which radically differs from these. It affirms that if human beings agree to place at the basis of their entire life (including their work) love for every neighbor, God associates them with his work as Creator and Redeemer.

On the seventh day God the Creator rested, almost as if to say that there our turn was beginning to continue God's work.

Through our work, nature receives the human imprint, but since in loving we live out the fact that we are made in the image of God, nature transformed by us, and therefore our work, becomes almost the work of God.

Thus human beings continue the work of God, the Creator; and, in a way, they also continue the redemptive work of Christ.

We know that there is an intimate bond between humans and the universe. They have been formed from the earth and when they die they return to the earth. They live off the fruits of the earth and breath the air around them. We know how original sin had an effect on the universe as well, in that because of it the original harmony of nature was broken. "Accursed be the soil because of you. With suffering shall you get your food from it every day of your life" (Gen 3:17).

Ever since then, all forms of human work have been inevitably linked to fatigue and suffering. But God sent his son on earth, and the redemption he brought about reaches the

entire person, therefore the aspect of work as well. Fatigue and suffering remain, but the person who loves, in some way, through his or her fatigue and suffering, cooperates with the Son of God towards the redemption of all, and towards all becoming children of God, that is, towards the reality we call the kingdom of God.

## New heavens and a new earth

Through the individual, the merits of redemption penetrate all creation.

In Christ the redemption of the universe has already been accomplished. Since, however, in us and through us it is fulfilled in the measure in which we allow the Spirit of God to move us, "the whole created world (as Paul says) eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God ... because the world itself will be freed.... We know that all creation groans and is in agony even until now..." (Rom. 8:19-22).

Groaning and "is in agony." Why? Because it awaits the new heavens and new earth.

"We know neither the moment —says the Second Vatican Council—of the consumation of the earth and of man nor the way the universe will be transformed. The form of this world, distorted by sin, is passing away and we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling and a new earth."[5]

This transformation, which is first and foremost a gift of God, through his Spirit, is also our responsibility, and we participate in it through suffering and work in the measure in which we unite ourselves to the death of Christ.

Human work is, therefore, a continuation of the creative work of God.

The fatigue of work is a contribution towards the redemption of mankind and the restoration of the universe.

"Then I saw new heavens and a new earth—says the Book of Revelation—the former heavens and the former earth had passed away... I saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city... I heard a loud voice from the throne cry out, 'This is God's dwelling among men. He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and he shall be their God who is always with them'." (Rev. 21:1-5)

This is the Christian vision of things which we must always keep before us—the future which awaits us all, and which we can hope for if we cooperate by working in unity with our God—Creator and Redeemer.

However, we can have a certain foretaste of this reality already here on earth by bringing about through universal love that kingdom which transforms every working environment into "God's dwelling among men."

It is a life of great faith, therefore, which can help Christians of this century, as in the past, to resolve, together with all people of good will, the pressing social problems of our day.

We must not deprive the world of our contribution in this direction.

The early Christians lived universal love in a very decided way, and they looked to the new heavens and new earth which awaited them in the future. They were therefore able to solve their economic questions almost without realizing it, using methods which went with their times: "None of their members was ever in want" (Acts 4:34). Likewise, if we have the courage to believe fully in Christ and to live his words with total commitment, then in this century marred by hunger, discrimination, social inequality and the danger of nuclear catastrophy, we will bring about his kingdom of love among all people and discover the ways and means of reducing to the smallest possible number the persons in need. □

— 1) See inside back cover; 2) *Redemptor Hominis*, n. 16; 3) *Laborem Exercens*, n. 9; 4) John Paul II, *Address to the International Labor Organization* in Geneva, June 15, 1982, n. 10; 5) *Gaudium et Spes*, 39.

# Nurturing the climate of reconciliation

*An experience of communion among Christians of various traditions of the East and West. Steps along the way of the ecumenical journey.*

by Annamaria Pericoli

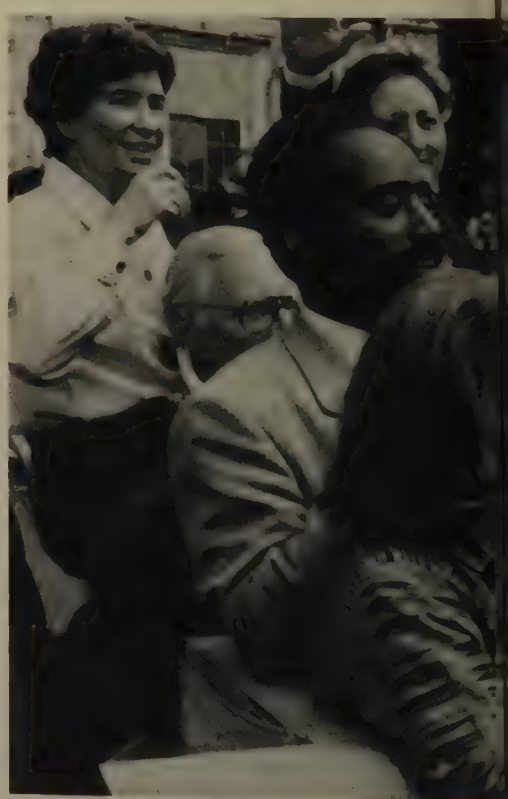
Two jars of oil—one coming from the East, the other from the West—poured into an antique lamp and burning in one single flame. A symbolic gesture performed by Pope John Paul II and Krysostomos of Myra, Orthodox Metropolite, as they met in Bari last February. This "liturgy", we could say, conveyed in a language far more expressive than words, the perfect image of the encounter between two sister Churches.

It was a gesture, therefore, that best explained the words Pope John Paul II had spoken on that occasion: "Unity...is the form that only love can give to life; it is not absorption, not even fusion." It is a reality that "contains all the elements of variety that are not only in each Church, but in every person and group pertaining to them."

This, in synthesis, is the aim and the itinerary of the dialogue among Christians; a journey towards the full communion of the various Churches and communities. The gesture of Bari, we must admit, tells us that, for the moment, it is merely the anticipation of a reality that is in the process of being built. It is a road that cannot be forced in the direction of the goal because "the Church, too, is subject to the dramatic tension of growth, to the stern law of development," the Pope remarked.

As I attended an ecumenical meeting in Rocca di Papa, Italy, with Orthodox and Roman Catholics, the image of the two jars and the single flame came to my mind along with another image. It was the image of the Icon which so beautifully represents the Orthodox spiritual world, and which to us Westerners, often is still mysterious.

It is known that the painters of icons prepare themselves through deep meditation, because in the composition of



the figures, in the drawing of the lines, in the application of color, in the arrangement of the masses according to a carefully studied balance, they try to express a spiritual reality—a true theology where the human and the divine join together letting the presence of the Spirit transpire. The Icon *par excellence* is, in fact, one of Jesus Christ. Next is the one of the "Theotocos," the Mother of God.

Now, as we stood together in our little group, I felt in fact that we, ourselves, were about to grow into our "image" as Church. This impression was made even stronger by the fact that the unity among us had grown during our meeting and the program we followed had opened "the eyes of the spirit," as an Orthodox expression goes, to the crucified and risen Lord, model and teacher of unity, dynamic "key" towards its achievement. This had been the theme of our days spent together.

Our group was certainly varied. It included Christians of the Patriarchates and the Churches of the Near East: Greek, Serbian, Rumanian, Cypriot. From Asia, a young Indian woman from the Syrian Orthodox Church brought the presence of her community which goes back to the Apostle Thomas. There were also three young deacons of the ancient Eastern Church of Ethiopia, together with a layman in charge of assisting African refugees. It was not a big group, but intensely eager to learn about the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, unity, and therefore dialogue. After having completed theological studies in their own Church, many of the participants are now studying at various universities in Germany to attain a deeper knowledge of Western theology. Also present at the meeting was Archimandrate John Dalea of the Rumanian Patriarchate, great promoter of ecumenical relations in North America.

Bishop Gennadios, who is responsible for the Greek Orthodox community in Italy, came as the delegate of Dimitrios I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Because of the great prestige of

*Pope John Paul II, during the general audience, paused to greet members of the group participating in the ecumenical meeting held at Rocca di Papa, Italy. "The joy and the love expressed by the Pope for the group was indescribable."*

the Patriarchate, his presence was another strong and tangible sign of how much the Orthodox hierarchy at the highest level yearns to reestablish full communion, and how desirable it is deemed to see the reality of unity understood at the grassroots level.

After centuries of distance, that "hard law of development" mentioned by Pope John Paul II may in fact require time to reach the point where we'll be able to distinguish between variety that enriches and completes us and the differences that still exist and divide us. But if there is love among the members of the family, couldn't the journey towards unity be hastened? Without the consent of the faithful, without their awareness and acceptance of responsibility, unity among the Churches cannot advance. Our gathering at Rocca di Papa wanted to be a response and an affirmation of our readiness to undertake this commitment, in keeping with the demands of the Gospel.

There were three specific encounters which gave our group the opportunity to experience and strengthen the bonds that unite us.

First, there was the encounter with our roots. The visit to the Catacombs of Domitilla, and to the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul, revived the awareness of our common reality and history. It was moving to experience with our Orthodox friends how close we are to these "living stones," with those who first bore witness to Christ.

*Bishop Gennadios, (right) responsible for the Greek Orthodox community in Italy, attended the meeting as the delegate of Dimitrios I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.*

The second highly significant encounter occurred at Vermicino, near Rocca di Papa, where we spent the afternoon with the young community of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary. It was a contact with one of the charisms of the Church; in this case the charism for the proclamation of the Gospel. There was a festive atmosphere, which well expressed the experience this community is living. It has been rekindled to new splendor because of the unity the members of the community have rediscovered and are living. It is the presence of Jesus among them, who through their unity proclaims the Gospel message.

Finally, the encounter in St. Peter's Square, during the general audience with Pope John Paul II. The joy and the love expressed by the Pope for the group was indescribable.

Three intense moments of communion—"a truly unforgettable event," said one Serbian student, "which will help us strengthen the fabric of unity in our everyday lives. Now that we are about to part, I'm sure that this unity will not diminish. It will grow because these moments have offered an authentic contribution towards the unity of the Church."

During the five days of the convention, these experiences matured into a deep reflection on the very mystery of God's encounter with us, on the crucified and risen Lord who generates the Church as his own mystical body, on the cross which, when embraced out of love, leads to resurrection and places us squarely on the road to unity.

This has been the experience that the spirituality of the Focolare has offered to the meeting. The late Patriarch

*The intervals in the program provided the opportunity to develop relationships of sincere friendship. One young participant at the meeting commented: "A truly unforgettable event which will help us strengthen the fabric of unity in our everyday lives. Now that we are about to part, I'm sure that this unity will not diminish. It will grow because these moments have offered an authentic contribution towards the unity of the Church."*

Athenagoras, in his frequent visits with Chiara Lubich, had understood it to be the Movement's specific charism for this time in the history of the Church. He had pointed to it as the road to unity: "We see the plan of our Lord, as he leads us through the mystery of the cross to the secret of unity between the Churches. They already find themselves together in the same ark, propelled by the winds of Christ's love towards the long-awaited shore."

Twenty years after the Second Vatican Council, the ecumenical journey has covered some extremely important milestones and is moving in a decidedly positive direction. It was Bishop Eleuterio Fortino working with the Secretariat for Christian Unity, who illustrated this dialogue for us, calling attention to the important meetings which had made it more concrete, explaining the present situation. "The objective of both the Catholic and the Orthodox Church is to reestablish full and complete communion, and not something in between." The steps taken towards this goal have been relevant, but we are still on our way.

During the period of May 30 to June 8 of this year, the third plenary session of the mixed Orthodox Catholic Consultation Commission for Theological Dialogue met on the Island of Crete. The theme chosen since 1982 was "Faith - Sacraments - Unity", and the Commission has just released the results of its first preliminary phase of studies.

It is the sacraments, in fact, that unite in the deepest way—beyond all theological concept—the reality of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, for it is through the sacraments that they express their identical faith—a continuation of the faith of the Apostles.

We cannot anticipate the answers and conclusions that will emerge from the research now in progress, but the "dialogue of charity" which is already nurturing the climate of reconciliation among all the Churches, and penetrating all doctrinal aspects, is already an experience of unity. □

# WORD OF LIFE

"Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God what is God's."
(Mt. 22:21)

*The word makes us live.*

*The word makes us free.*

*The word guarantees happiness.*

*The word converts.*

*The word purifies us.*

*The word draws us to our specific vocations.*

*The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.*

*The word makes us see the truth.*

*The word brings comfort.*

*The word gives us joy.*

*The word produces works.*

*The word gives wisdom.*

*The word preserves us from human concerns.*

*The word obtains everything.*

*The word brings about union with God.*

*The word gives us hope of eternal life.*

*The word makes us one.*

*The word changes one's mentality.*

*The word makes each soul a heaven.*

**"Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God what is God's."**

This sentence, in its simplicity, is rich in insight for all of us—men and women living in a given place in the world, belonging to a particular race or nation.

On what occasion did Jesus pronounce these words?

The Hebrew people were subject to taxation by the Romans and this was the humiliating sign of their submission to a foreign power, and a pagan one at that. This fact remained an intolerable scandal for this people who recognized only Yahweh's sovereignty. This fact gave the Pharisees, who viewed Jesus' popularity with dismay, the chance to set a trap for him. They sent some of their disciples, together with a group of Herodian sympathizers, to ask Jesus the following question: "Is it lawful to pay tax to the Emperor or not?" It was certainly a loaded question: the Herodians were pro-Roman in their thought while the Pharisees advocated independence. Had Jesus answered yes, the Pharisees could have accused him in front of the crowds of being a Roman sympathizer, a traitor. It would have meant bringing upon him the aversion of the entire anti-Roman segment of the population. If, on the other hand, he had answered no, the Herodians would have been in a position to denounce Jesus as an enemy of Rome, a dissident, an extremist.

Jesus asked them to show him the coin used to pay tribute and tell him whose image was stamped on it and whose inscription it bore. "Caesar's," they replied, and Jesus affirmed:

**"Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God what is God's."**

Practically speaking, Jesus was saying, "If, in fact, you use Roman coins, it means that willingly or not, you recognize Caesar's authority and therefore must pay the imposed taxes."

Jesus did not oppose paying taxes to the authorities. On the contrary he implied that it had to be done. For him, the importance did not lie in the question of paying taxes to the Roman Emperor; but in giving one's soul and heart to God.

**"Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God what is God's."**

Various interpretations have been given to this sentence. However, what is most striking about it, is Jesus' great freedom in the face of political power. Compared to the Herodians who sided with Rome's authority and promoted a total-

itarian ideology which went so far as to divinize the Emperor, and to the Pharisees who were slaves of a theocratic mentality which tied the cause of God to the political liberation of their country, Jesus stood out as a truly free human being. By inviting all to love God above every other thing he withdrew all support of the totalitarian state promoted by the Herodians and the theocratic state promoted by the Pharisees. At the same time he indirectly placed his disciples—whether persons of authority or average citizens—in the perfect circumstances for performing their civil duties in a spirit of true service towards their neighbors.

**"Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God what is God's."**

How can we live this word of life?

It urges us, even if indirectly, to make (or renew) and live out our choice of God and his mandate of love in our social and political commitment and to carry out our duties toward the nation. First of all it helps us avoid two dangers which are opposite and equally serious. One is a sense of distrust and disinterest in a political commitment, as if it were something evil. The other attitude is one of exaggerated trust and consists in an unwarranted rush to seek the results which a political commitment can offer. The social and political mileau must undoubtedly be penetrated by the Gospel spirit. But this will be possible inasmuch as those who are called to work there give God the first place in their lives and put their love for him into practice through true service to society, working with detachment, patience and perseverance.

Even more concretely, those who are called to work actively in politics, should make of their work a true service to their fellow human beings, giving preference to the poor, to the "least." There are endless opportunities for this to be done, not only by politicians and statesmen, but by all civil personnel, no matter what their position. They can all live out their choice of God by rendering a service which is always more unselfish, more timely, more constant.

It may be expressed, for example, by giving a faster and better prepared answer to someone's valid request, or helping eliminate some red tape.

**"Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to God what is God's."**

As for ordinary citizens, this word of life will urge them to faithfully fulfill their duties toward the nation and to cultivate an always greater sense of responsibility for the common good. It is our Christian duty, for example, to vote in political and administrative elections unless it is impossible to do so because of circumstances.

It is our duty to pay our taxes since without them the government cannot supply the services which the community needs, or contributing within each person's possibilities towards the smooth running of the system.

It is also our Christian duty to respect the laws which want to protect the lives and well-being of citizens, to feel responsible in helping to conserve those goods which belong to the community as a whole: public buildings, streets, parks, forests, public means of transportation and so on. Even in these situations a particular sentence of Jesus holds true: "Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40). In the final analysis our service is counted as done to Jesus, whom we love in each neighbor.

We should be happy to have varied and frequent possibilites to do so.

**Chiara Lubich**

# EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences in living the Gospel which some of our readers have shared with us.

## ONLY ONE POSSESSION IN LIFE

I am a mother of two small children and recently I noticed that we needed a lot of things around the house. The children needed new shoes, we needed new bath towels, the T.V. needed fixing, my husband needed new uniforms for work and I also needed some new clothes. The list seemed to get always longer and longer, but our budget was getting smaller and smaller. It was more than ever the moment to live the word of life, "Give and it will be given to you" (Lk. 6:38). These words of Jesus seemed to fit my situation perfectly. I knew that God would provide my family with what we needed but I had to do my part and go through everything that we didn't need and give it away.

The results were amazing! I went through my closet and got rid of all the clothes that I hadn't recently worn and that I didn't need. Little by little the money came for new clothes. My husband and children did this also and the results were the same. God really provided! My mother decided to give us beautiful new towels as a gift when my husband helped her paint their house.

Then I felt that I had to still take another step. I realized that there were still a few things in the house that I was particularly attached to. I knew that in order to really let God work I had to be detached from everything.

My mother had given me a beautiful plate collection which I kept on a long rack in the dining room. One morning my son decided to take a closer look at one of the plates and it fell and broke. My first reaction was that he had broken something that was very dear to me. I also realized that since these plates were a limited edition I wouldn't be able to get another one, and the value of the collection went down. I decided that I would take down all the plates and put them away so that no more could be broken. It was then that I realized how attached I was to those plates. I couldn't give them away because they had been a gift, so I decided that the best thing to do was to leave them there on the rack in the dining room. I decided to keep the broken one as well, to remind myself that I wanted to have only one possession in life: God.

C.H.

## A LESSON IN LENDING

New neighbors had moved in next door. They had no lawn mower of their own. I had loaned them my mower twice and when I saw that their grass was getting tall I offered it to them again. Later that day, when they had finished cutting the grass, I saw that they had gone inside the house leaving the mower sitting in the yard. It began to look more and more like rain. Several times I looked out—the mower was there but no one else was in sight.

I began to get a little anxious thinking that if it started to rain the mower could be ruined. My worrying was leading me to think unkindly, and make negative judgments about the very neighbors that I had earlier wanted to love by offering the use of my lawn mower.

The word of life flashed across my mind: "The whole of the Law is summarized in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Gal. 45:14). I decided to set aside my anxiety and treat these neighbors as I myself would like to be treated. If I was reliable about the care of the machine, why not expect that of them.

A short while later, before any rain fell, our neighbor returned the machine carefully putting it back in its place in our shed. When I went out, he thanked me for its use and said he had waited until the mower was cool before putting it back indoors. What a lesson for me!

C.R.

# 1985 VACATION MARIAPOLIS

Alfred University  Alfred, New York

August 9-17

Please see upcoming issues

for sites and dates of the other Mariapolises.

# Another small victory for unity

I am a high school teacher in an inner city public school. My classes were formed after the school year began, composed of students who had been classified "slow learners." For various reasons, they were also discipline problems.

One of the first days I walked into the classroom, the students were all plastered against the window. Since I had been warned that they threw dictionaries out the window, I went over to see the situation. Instead I found one of the boys being hung out the window by his heels. We were three flights up.

For one class, a fellow teacher suggested I follow a seating chart she had drawn up for me. She explained that in order to keep some quiet with that class, she had arranged the students according to whom showed the most animosity toward whom. In other words, she said, she had seated Mark next to Lori because they loathed one another. It was a system, she assured me that worked. I was surprised with the reasoning, but once in the classroom, I could see why she had reached this point.

The students really did dislike each other and they missed no opportunity to express their feelings to one another. These 'conversations' would erupt during lessons, in between lessons, at all times. They swore at each other, called out insulting names, accused each other of cheating, stole books, materials, etc. The verbal fights continued until one or the other would tire of it and lapse into a contemptuous silence. Meanwhile, others would start up.

In order to change this atmosphere it was clear that I would have to show them another kind of relationship. Shortly after arriving, I explained very briefly that there *was* another way to relate to each other, and then, each time the verbal insults began, I stopped and interjected, "Please do not speak to him (or her) in this way," and then continued on with the lesson. Since at one time or another they were all defended, they liked this behavior. It was a constant struggle not to lose my temper and, when I had, to start all over again. The onslaught was so constant that just to walk into the classroom took energy. I found myself dreading 5th period with all my being.

One day, on my way down the corridor as my heart was sinking, I suddenly understood that this class really had to be my favorite because in the suffering that it presented to me I could recognize an aspect of Jesus' suffering on the cross when he cried out: "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46). I realized then that I could meet him in a special way in the hours I spent with these students, listening to their stories and problems. From that point on it was a race to love Him—to say yes, and to make their suffering my own in the split second before any new outburst arose. I began to truly love that group. It was not that any dent showed in their antagonism, but I found myself actually anticipating that class because I was sure to find Him.

One day, over the PA system we heard (barely): "There is no immediate danger but exit the building—immediately." The school emptied in seconds. A fire had been started but was quickly contained in one of the wings of the school. When the students re-entered the building, a quarter of my class was in the office for having helped plan the fire.

In the relative calm of the room, I looked around and realized that this was the moment to speak with those who were left. I explained about that other kind of relationship. I told them that in my own life, I had found it summarized in one word: unity. Then, I asked them what they thought the word meant. After joking and playing, eventually they came up with such words as: working together, cooperation and so on. I challenged them if they would like to take part in a deal to develop that kind of relationship with whomever walked in the door. A few of the tougher boys remaining were fascinated, not sure what there were getting into. One of them decided he would try it. Then a girl took the paper. Then a few more signed up. The bell rang and they left the room mystified, shaking their heads. Several said, "I ain't never heard no teacher talk like this before. You're really strange." Everyone agreed to that.

The next day the classroom atmosphere was improved. Once the barrage began, I looked at the student. He had

signed the paper, and in mid-sentence he stopped short. This happened with a few others and an air of expectancy surfaced. Those who knew what was going on waited to see what would happen. It was noticeably quieter; some of the students were puzzled.

Shortly after this day, a teacher entered the room, requesting time to speak with the class. She accused them of stealing an object that had been decorating the room.

Indignation filled the room. They were incensed, outraged. They could barely contain themselves. They stumbled over their words in tolerably acceptable language. When she had left the room, they exploded. They demanded an apology. They were innocent, had always been innocent, had never stolen anything in their lives.

After the initial uproar had subsided, I told them that if they said they had not stolen the object, I would believe them. They were stunned. In this moment of silence, I suggested that if they really wanted to deal with the situation in style, they might write her a letter stating that they had not stolen it, but that they were sorry it was missing and would like to help contribute in some small way to replacing it. They were even more stunned than before. "That's the craziest idea I ever heard" was the consensus. "Then she'll be *sure* we stole it!"

I agreed that the suggestion was beyond reason and while some of the students struggled to understand the logic, Lori stood up and said, "I think this is ridiculous, but here." She flung down some bills. The class didn't move. Then all of a sudden, Mark whipped around and said at the top of his lungs, "She didn't do it Ms. Adams. Don't think she did it 'cause it ain't so!" The class sat motionless, dumbfounded. Then someone else said, "Well Mark didn't do it either. I *know* that." Then they began to say, "So and so didn't do it...." They were defending each other. Slowly this realization that they were defending each other hit home. Out of the many voices, one boy's voice sailed through: "Hey! Ms. Adams, is this what you meant by unity?" For a split second there was silence and then the uproar began again. They were happy. They were even proud of their cohesiveness. "Look at that," one of them said. "This ain't so bad."

The next day the teacher returned. She apologized for having accused them falsely; another student from her room had removed the object. The class was gracious in accepting her apology, but they told her never to do it again. Since then the rapport among the students has steadily improved. The last day of class, one of the more difficult boys who had never completely cracked, again threw a dictionary at another student. Suddenly he turned around and said, "Oh, I'm sorry." It was a split second, but a first for him. Others in the class noticed and covered up their own reaction so as not to embarass him. It was another small victory for unity.

**M.A.**

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# Intrigue at Rimini

*Continuing our "report" from the first centuries of Christianity, the climax of the attack on the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ by the Arians resulted in one of the most dramatic moments in the life of the Church of all times. The faithful displayed an awareness of the importance of the traditional Catholic truth. Despite all the interventions of the Emperor Constantius on behalf of the Arianism, the people held fast to the genuine faith.*

by SILVANO COLA

Does chaos give birth to politics; or is politics which causes chaos? From examining the short period following the Council of Nicaea I have been inescapably drawn to accept the latter; otherwise I cannot comprehend how such a chaos could have happened.

A mere two years after the great council, the Arians, with the approval of the Emperor, published a declaration of faith which was heretical. It was even published as an Imperial Edict, but it had to be immediately repealed in order to calm the protests of a popular uprising of the Christians in Milan, where the decree had been issued!

In those days the Emperor lived in a little town on the banks of the River Sava (in what is now Yugoslavia) called Sirmium. It was an important crossroad in the Empire, being a large military fortress and an Imperial mint.

The Arian party, under the leadership of Ursacius, Valens and Germinius, attempted a new move. They modified the original Declaration of faith a little in order to camouflage their ideas which were still fundamentally Arian. This time however, it was issued by the Bishops of the Imperial Court.

**It's a fake!**

What a scandal erupted! It wasn't just the signatures of those bishops who were obedient to the Emperor which caused the furor so much as that fact that it contained the signature of no less a person that Hosius, the Patriarch of Cordoba: the very man who had presided over the Council of Nicaea, and had accepted the formula "The Son is 'consubstantial' with the Father."

The loyal Catholic Bishops were dismayed, to put it mildly, and would not accept either the signature or the declaration. "This cannot be true! This declaration is still contrary to the Catholic faith," they wrote, "because it explicitly shows the Son to be inferior to the Father. From all that we know of Bishop Hosius, it is ridiculous to believe that he signed it."

When the ordinary people heard they were not at all inhibited about speaking out: "It's a fake!" they bellowed out, and went off to find out what was going on. They hunted out old Bishop Hosius and found him in bed with a high fever. He was over a hundred years old by then—a pitiful sight. He was too weak even to answer their questions. However, from his almost inaudible whisper they gathered that messengers sent by Ursacius and Valens had scandalously ill-treated him, and forced him to sign the document. He had already let his friend Athanasius know that his signature had been forced from him, and that he remained faithful to the Creed of Nicea.

From then on the Arians lacked credibility to say the least. In Britain and in Gaul the Bishops spoke out against the Declaration of Sirmium as soon as they read it, despite the signature of Hosius. They commissioned Febadius, Bishop of Agen, to answer on their behalf that they refused the proposed formula. Bishop Hilary of Poitiers was exiled in Frigia for his faith, so they sent to him, telling him of the latest Arian plot. Also from Africa the bishops sent another reply that they and their people would remain loyal to the faith of the Church as it was declared at Nicea.

**Bribery and exile**

Bishop Hilary was not the only one in exile for the faith at the time; Pope Liberius, the Bishop of Rome was as well. He had come into conflict with the Emperor Constantius II, son of the Emperor Constantine, because he had supported and defended Athanasius and the other exiled orthodox Bishops.

When the Emperor had attempted to buy the support of the loyal Bishops by sending a fairly obvious bribe, in the form of a fat purse of gold presented ceremoniously on the tomb of

Saint Peter in the great basilica; the Pope, Bishop Liberius, had the official delegate (and the money) thrown out.

Liberius was arrested and sent secretly to Milan to appear before Constantius who it was said secretly hoped that he could persuade the Pope to excommunicate Athanasius. Who would ever dream of such a thing. The Pope, it is recorded, smiled sadly and compassionately at the Emperor. As for the Emperor, he thundered out the question: "Just who do you think you are? Don't you realize that you are the only one disturbing the peace of the world?" Liberius replied: "Even if I am alone to keep the true faith, the faith remains what it is. A long time ago there were only three people to stand beneath a certain cross, but they were enough."

"Sign the condemnation and you can return to Rome," snarled the Emperor. "I have already said my farewells in Rome," replied the Pope calmly. "Do you think that, for me, to stay in Rome is more important than keeping faith with the decisions of the Church?"

Two days later Pope Liberius left under guard for Tracia. The Emperor immediately replaced him with the anti-Pope, Felix. For two years the people of Rome harrassed the Emperor to bring back their 'real' Pope. Eventually Constantius was forced to consent to his return under the provision that Felix and Liberius rule the Church jointly. And so it was. Had there ever been a scene of greater foolishness?

The Romans were told of the news in no lesser place than the Circus Maximus. An eye-witness of the occasion reported that the cry of "One God, one Christ, one Bishop," could be heard as far away as the seaport of Ostia.

*Constantius II, Roman Emperor from 337-361 A.D.*

**A new council...**

No sooner did Liberius set foot in Rome than the citizens drove Felix out of the city. The Emperor Constantius was livid! These religious squabbles exasperated him; consequently when two Arian bishops proposed a new council he jumped at the opportunity in the hope that this time they might settle the dispute once and for all. He again suggested Nicaea, but the bishops had been well instructed by Ursacius and Valens and replied, "Most pious Emperor, at this time there are two different languages spoken in the East and West and it is not easy for them to understand each other. Besides which, do you not think that it would be an enormous expense to take all the Latin bishops to the East? Would it not be better to have two councils meeting at the same time?... And so it was decided to hold one council at Rimini and the other at Seleucia, in northern Turkey.

The maneouvering of the Arians was obvious. They felt certain of having a majority in the East, as previous experience had shown. They were equally confident that the western bishops would sign any formulation of faith that was set in front of them at Rimini, not only because they were so inexperienced in the subtleties of theological language, but also because the Arian 'Fifth Column' organized by Ursacius and Valens, and supported by the Emperor Constantius, would be there. But they reckoned without the reactions of their hosts, the ordinary

Christian people who once again entered the fray as defenders of the faith.

**...A new creed**

This is what happened: a new creed was prepared at Sirmium, but it had to be approved at both Seleucia and Rimini. It began with a great flourish: "This is the Catholic faith as it has been presented in the presence of our Lord the most pious and triumphant Emperor Constantius Augustus ... long life and great honor ... this 22nd day of May in the year 359.... We believe in one God and in one Son ... begotten of God before time began ... alike in all things with the Father who begat him...."

When they heard that, almost all the 400 bishops meeting together in Rimini began to protest, saying that the true faith was that of Nicaea because it went back to the Apostles; and they declared Ursacius, Valens and their associates to be heretics.

The Arians promptly sent a delegation to the Emperor to have this disturbance of the 'settlement' condemned: while the Catholic party did their utmost to get their position defended. The Emperor Constantius, however, received the Arian delegation and declined to receive the Catholics. The Arian delegation then asked for a meeting with the Catholics and explained that the reason why the Council of Seleucia had annulled the word 'consubstantial' was because it was not to be found in Scripture; and that, they said, "is why we say that the Son is 'alike' is all things with the Father."

The Western bishops gave that much thought and replied that this terminology would be acceptable provided that they did not call the Son a creature. "Heaven forbid!" the Arians replied. "Arius was most surely pronounced heretic for saying that; but we believe that the Son is not only 'like the Father' in all things but is also *eternally* like the Father."

On October 10, 359 A.D., after months of discussion, all the western bishops, present at Rimini, having declared 'nothing is more precious to us than the unity of the Church', put forward one more condition before they signed the creed. If 'alike in all things' meant more or less the same as 'consubstantial', they said, then the proposed formula would be orthodox, and they would not be justified in perpetuating a division for the sake of a word; but they insisted that an appendix be attached which would clearly excommunicate anyone who suggested that the Son of God was a 'creature'. Ursacius and Valens most readily agreed ... and so it was accepted.

**Mass protests**

Everyone was happy ... that is except for a few of the faithful who immediately raised the cry "The Arians have cheated!" The word spread like wildfire. There was a mass protest outside the house of Bishop Valens. There was nothing he could do to satisfy them but go with them in front of the local Prefect, a man named Taurus, who had been at the Council representing the Emperor Constantius, and swear, "I am not an Arian. I have always abhorred his blasphemy." Even so the crowd would not be satisfied and demanded an assembly of both bishops and laity in a church on the outskirts of Rimini.

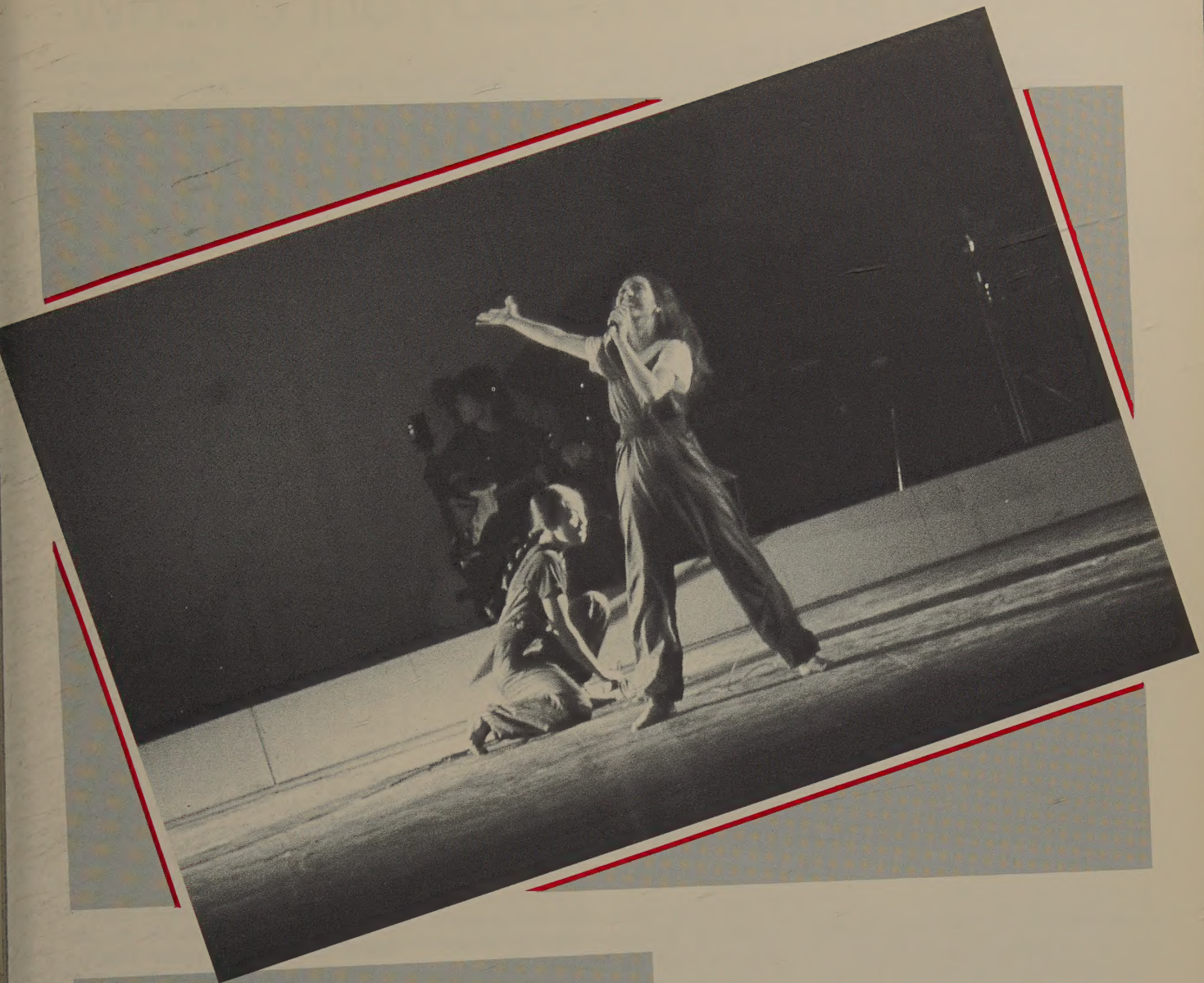
Once again Valens proclaimed, "I have already told you, and I tell you again, I believe that the Son of God is not a creature, and that whoever says it should be excommunicated."

The bishops applauded and even apologized for having suspected him of heresy...but the people were still not convinced. A servant in the house of Bishop Valens had heard him laughing and joking over lunch with his friends, and saying, "We've done it." The bishops however, were convinced: the formula conformed with the faith of Nicaea, and so—thinking that they had finally reestablished full communion between the Church of the East and the Church of the West without compromising their conscience—they signed the formulary.

What a disaster followed! The Arians were overjoyed! They danced, patting each other on the back, and laughing scornfully declared, "We never actually declared that the Son was 'uncreated', only that he was 'not like other creatures '."

The Catholic bishops turned pale. They brought the scrolls which they had signed and reread them. To their horror they read "who affirms that the Son of God is a creature—like other creatures—shall be excommunicated." With that addition the meaning had been radically changed. He was 'not like other creatures', but still 'a creature'.

*(Continued on page 28)*



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*Rimini, the arch of Augustus. In this city, unknown to Pope Liberius, Constantius called together a "council" which was then manipulated by the Arians. Not only did it fail to re-establish religious peace in the Empire, but it widened even further the division existing among Christians.*

*(Continued from page 26)*

The western bishops had signed an Arian profession of faith! By inserting four words Valens had successfully cheated them.

**A vehement response**

What happened in Seleucia? So far the orthodox bishops in the Council at Seleucia had refused to accept an Arian formula, even though there was enormous confusion of thought. They continued their discussions in Constantinople but when the news came that in Rimini the western bishops had acquiesced, they felt theirs to be a lost cause.

Not everyone, however, gave up the struggle. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who had been exiled in the year 356, also went to Constantinople. When he heard that his western colleagues had betrayed the truth, filled with holy wrath he wrote them a letter: "What have you done? Even a servant, and not a particularly loyal servant at that, but at least an honest one, would not have put up with his master being so insulted! If he could have, he would have retaliated! A soldier defends his rights, even at the cost of his own rights, even at the cost of his own life.... Even a dog barks when he smells something amiss, and will break his chain at the slightest uncertainty. But you, you 'feel that you can agree' that Christ, the only Son of God, is not God! And, adding to this blasphemy. you stand mutely by, keeping your mouths tightly shut!..."

However, there were still a few bishops who had not capitulated. Hidden away somewhere there was still Athanasius, always much in demand. There was Eusabius, Bishop of Vercelli, and those others who had been deposed, exiled or who had voluntarily left the arena in order to avoid being blackmailed by Constantius and his accomplices.

Even so, the Church presented a dismal picture. Heresy seemed to dominate the Empire. One of the few who spoke up. St. Jerome of Stridone wrote, "The whole world is grieving; astonished to discover itself so unexpectedly Arian."

That little boat, so painstakingly constructed by the Apostles, all but overcome by furious gales, and battered by violent waves, was within a split second of sinking to the bottom! It seemed as if there were no hope; but it was just at that moment that the Lord awoke and calmed the storm. The beast, of course, was Constantius. The Emperor died on November 3, 361 A.D., on the lower slopes of Mount Taurus.

St. Hilary wrote of him, "I tell you clearly, as I would have told Nero. You fought against God; you would have destroyed the Church; you persecuted the saints; you hated what Christ taught. You made a mockery of religion and played the tyrant not only in human matters but in divine ones as well. You lie when you call yourself a Christian—you are the enemy of Christ, the very forerunner of the anti-Christ."

I have done a little research among people, and what I have discovered has made me laugh! To all I have asked, "Is Jesus God or not?" and everyone has answered in more or less the same words, "Of course he is God! How else could he have saved us?" Therein lies the irony of history!" □

# What is the Focolare Movement?

## THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

## WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

## THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

## GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

## THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

## PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT —SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

## FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

## ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

## SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according the Gospel.

## PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

## MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

## FOCOLARE ADDRESSES IN NORTH AMERICA


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